

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1806

May 25, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

We urge you to instruct the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to quickly investigate the severe flooding in southwest Louisiana and the Capital Region to make a determination of whether conditions have been met for a presidential disaster declaration. Having observed inundation in parts of Baton Rouge and Lake Charles that rival the historic destruction of the Louisiana Floods of 2016 and Hurricane Laura in 2020, Individual Assistance and other federal aid is clearly necessary for homeowners to return to their homes, many of which have flooded in recent disasters.

As you know, a massive storm system battered parts of the southern United States last week, threatening lives and property for more than 30 million people. Many areas in South Louisiana saw more than a foot of rain in 24 hours, which resulted in devastating flash floods, damage to hundreds of homes, and the loss of at least five lives. Closely following a pandemic and a record-setting 2020 hurricane season, the damage caused by this rainstorm will have long-lasting effects on the people of South Louisiana and federal assistance is badly needed to jump start the recovery process.

Although the State is in the early phases of assessing damage in affected parishes, we ask that you give weight to the compounding effects of recent disasters that have fatigued local recovery resources and disaster survivors alike. Last year was the most active hurricane season in American history, and six different storms threatened Louisiana's homeowners. Every single parish in Louisiana was hit by at least one named storm in 2020, stressing emergency response resources that were already strained by the COVID-19 pandemic. As you know, Sec. 1232 of the Disaster Recovery Reform Act (Public Law 115-254) requires the Administrator of the Federal Management Agency to give "greater consideration" to recent multiple disasters, making "corresponding adjustments" to account for the cumulative effects of multiple disasters occurring within close chronological and geographical proximity.

In order to best allow for a complete disaster response and recovery, we ask that FEMA examine the impacts of all these events and provide Individual Assistance to affected homeowners accordingly. We

respectfully request that you instruct the Administrator make full use of these authorities to respond to this imminent disaster.

We respectfully and urgently ask that you consider these extenuating circumstances as you calculate approvals of individual and public assistance. These resources must be quickly made available to equip our state and local governments to respond quickly and effectively to this historic storm system, which will have long-lasting effects on the people of Louisiana.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Garret Graves", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Garret Graves
Member of Congress